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(54) Benævnelse: **FORBINDELSESINDRETNING TIL FASTGØRELSE AF EKSPANDEREDE CELLEBEGRÆNSNINGSSTRUKTURER OG FREMGANGSMÅDER TIL ANVENDELSE DERAF**

(56) Fremdragne publikationer:
JP-U- S5 785 045
KR-A- 20070 066 397
US-A- 1 666 783
US-A1- 2008 213 521

DESCRIPTION

Technical Field

[0001] This disclosure relates to connection devices for expanded cellular confinement structures for the confinement of infill material. In particular, this disclosure relates to connectors and methods used for fastening together at least two expanded cellular confinement structures.

Background

[0002] A cellular confinement structure serves to increase the load bearing capacity, stability, and erosion resistance of infill materials which are placed within the cells of the system. A commercially available system is Geoweb® plastic web confinement structure sold by Presto Products, Inc., Appleton, Wisconsin. Geoweb® cells are made from high density polyethylene strips that are joined by welds on their faces in a side-by-side relationship at alternating spaces so that when the strips are stretched out in a direction perpendicular to the faces of the strips, the resulting web section is honeycomb-like in appearance, with sinusoidal or undulated-shaped cells. Geoweb® sections are lightweight and are shipped in their collapsed form for ease in handling and installation..

[0003] The cellular confinement structures are typically arranged adjacent to each other and then connected together. In the past, these sections have been connected together by using staples, wires, cable ties, etc. These devices are labor-intensive and consume excessive construction time. In many implementations, these types of connections are difficult to use because of the particular situation or terrain. Most often, these types of connection systems require power from generators and air actuation from compressors. The requirement for power can add to the difficulty, given the particular environment or terrain that such cellular confinement systems are typically placed. The unit cost per connection can be quite high on smaller projects as the fixed costs for supply of generators and air compressors are similar to a small installation as would be required for a large installation. Moreover, some of these connection devices provide relatively weak structural connections and are non-durable. In some implementations, these are not problems. In many applications, however, speed is important and the availability of power equipment is challenging. In many implementations, long-term durability is mandatory. Improvements are desirable.

[0004] US 2008/213521 A1 discloses multiphase polymeric material which comprises a first rigid continuous phase and a second elastic phase dispersed in the first phase. The multiphase polymeric material may be formed into polymeric strips and used to make a cellular confinement system which is suitable for use in cold areas.

[0005] Related technology is disclosed in JP S57 85045 U, KR 2007 0066397 and US 1 666 783.

Summary of the Disclosure

[0006] A connection device, not claimed as such, for fastening two expanded cellular confinement structures is provided. In general, the connection device includes an insertion member having first and second opposite insertion ends and an insertion member extension therebetween. An integral shank extends from the insertion member extension and is spaced from each of the first and second insertion ends. A handle member extends generally from the shank at an end of the shank that is remote from the insertion member. The handle member has first and second handle ends and a handle member extension therebetween. The shank is spaced from each of the first and second handle ends.

[0007] A cellular confinement system is provided. The cellular confinement system includes first and second unitary webs of cells made from elongated plastic strips bonded together in spaced apart areas. The strips form walls of the cells and at least some of the cells define open slots. At least one open slot of a first unitary web of cells is aligned with at least one open slot of a second unitary web of cells to result in a cell overlap region. The cell overlap region has opposite first and second sides. At least one connection device fastens the first unitary web of cells and the second unitary web of cells together. The connection device can be the type as characterized above. When used, the insertion member is located on the first side of the cell overlap region. The shank extends through the cell overlap region by extending through both of the aligned slots of the first and second unitary web of cells. The handle member is located on the second side of the cell overlap region. The cellular confinement system is defined in its entirety in the appended independent claim 1.

[0008] In another aspect, a method, not claimed as such, of fastening two expanded cellular confinement structures together is provided. The method includes aligning two expanded cellular confinement structures so that at least one open slot defined by a first unitary web of cells is aligned with at least one open slot defined by a second unitary web of cells to form an overlap region having first and second sides. The method includes inserting an insertion member of a connection device from the second side of the overlap region through the aligned open slots of the overlap region to provide: the insertion member on the first side of the overlap region; a handle member of the connection device on the second side of the overlap region; and a shank member between the insert member and the handle member extending through the overlap region.

[0009] In some implementations, the non-claimed method further includes rotating the handle to rotate the connection device within the overlap region.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0010]

FIG. 1 is a schematic, exploded perspective view of a cellular confinement system and connection devices, prior to assembly end-to end, utilizing principles in accordance with this disclosure;

FIG. 1A is a schematic, exploded perspective view of a cellular confinement system and connection devices, prior to lateral assembly, utilizing principles in accordance with this disclosure;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of two cells that are part of an expanded cellular confinement structure prior to being connected together;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of two expanded cellular confinement structures connected together utilizing connection devices constructed in accordance with principles of this disclosure;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of one embodiment of a connection device, constructed in accordance to principles of this disclosure;

FIG. 5 is another perspective view of the connection device of FIG. 4;

FIG. 6 is a top plan view of the connection device of FIGS. 4 and 5;

FIG. 7 is an end view of the connection device of FIG. 6;

FIG. 8 is another end view of the connection device of FIG. 6, depicting the opposite end of that shown in FIG. 7;

FIG. 9 is a top plan view of a second embodiment of connection device constructed in accordance with principles of this disclosure;

FIG. 10 is a perspective view of the connection device of FIG. 9;

FIG. 11 is a top plan view of the connection device of FIG. 9;

FIG. 12 is a perspective, top view of the connection device of FIGS. 9-11;

FIG. 13 is a schematic, perspective view of a step of using the connection device along with a tendon;

FIG. 14 is a schematic, perspective view of another step of using the connection device with a tendon; and

FIG. 15 is a schematic, perspective view of another step of using the connection device with a tendon.

Detailed Description

[0011] In FIGS. 1 and 1A, there is depicted a cellular confinement system 14. In the particular implementation shown, the cellular confinement system 14 includes first and second unitary webs of cells 18. The first web of cells is shown at 20, while the second web of cells is shown at 22. In the embodiment shown, the cellular confinement system 14 further includes at least one connection device 24 for fastening together the first web 20 and second web 22.

[0012] FIG. 1 shows the system 14 before the first and second webs 20, 22 are connected together in an end-to-end manner. FIG. 1A shows the system 14 before the first and second webs 20, 22 are connected together side-by-side (laterally). Each of the expanded cellular confinement structures 18 has a plurality of strips of plastic 26 that are bonded together, one strip to the next at alternating and equally spaced bonding areas 28 to form cell walls 30 of individual cells 32. When the plurality of strips 26 are stretched in a direction perpendicular to the face of the strips, the strips 26 bend in a sinusoidal manner and form webs 20, 22 of cells 32 in a repeating cell pattern. Each cell 32 has a cell wall 30 that is made up from one strip 26 and a cell wall 30 made from a different strip 26.

[0013] In this embodiment, the strips 26 define apertures 34. The apertures 34 can be used to accommodate tendons to reinforce the webs 20, 22 and improve the stability of web installations by acting as continuous, integral anchoring members to prevent unwanted displacement of the webs 20, 22. The apertures 34 also help to allow for aggregate interlock while maintaining sufficient wall stiffness for construction site infilling.

[0014] FIG. 2 shows two cells 32. The cells 32 in FIG. 2 differ somewhat from the depiction in FIG. 1, in that the strips 26 do not contain all of the apertures 34 as depicted in FIG. 1. The apertures 34 can be used optionally, depending upon the implementation. The option depicted in FIG. 2 does not show apertures 34 in the strips 26. FIG. 2 does depict, however, open slots 36 defined by the cell walls 30 in the strips 26. The slots 36 are utilized to cooperate with connection device 24 in order to fasten together adjacent webs 20, 22.

[0015] FIG. 3 shows the cellular confinement system 14 with the first web 20 and the second web 22 fastened together by connection device 24. In the embodiment of FIG. 3, at least one connection device 24 is used, and as shown, a plurality of connection devices 24 is used. FIG. 3 shows specifically two connection devices 24.

[0016] Still in reference to FIG. 3, a cell overlap region 38 is depicted. In particular, there are two cell overlap regions 38 depicted. The cell overlap region, as shown, includes an open slot 36 of the first unitary web of cells 20 aligned with open slot 36 of the second unitary web of cells 22. The cell overlap region 38 defines a first side 40 and an opposite second side 42. The connection device 24 can be seen penetrating or passing through the overlap region 38 with part of the connection device 24 on the first side of the overlap region 38, while another portion

of the connection device 24 can be seen in phantom on the second side 42 of the overlap region 38. An example of this will be described further below.

[0017] Attention is directed to FIGS. 4-8. FIGS. 4-8 depict one example embodiment of connection device 24. In the embodiment depicted, the connection device 24 includes an insertion member 44. The insertion member 44 has first and second opposite insertion ends 46, 47 and an insertion member extension 48 between the first insertion member end 46 and second insertion member end 47. A first length is defined by the distance between the first insertion member end 46 and second insertion member end 47.

[0018] In one embodiment, the first insertion member end 46 is tapered, by having a generally rounded triangular shape 50. This shape is required to provide a convenient and expedited use of the connection device 24 allowing for maximum width of the insertion member and therefore maximum load distribution of the forces upon the insertion member once placed in use.

[0019] In this embodiment, the second insertion end 47 is depicted as having a tapered end. As can be seen in FIG. 4, in this embodiment, the second insertion end 47 has a rounded triangular shape 52. This shape can help provide a fast and convenient use of the connection device 24 when connecting together and first and second webs 20, 22.

[0020] In the example embodiment shown, the insertion member 44 includes a pair of insertion member plates 54, 55. In the example shown, the insertion member plates 54, 55 are parallel to each other. In the example shown, the plates 54, 55 are joined by a bight section 56. In the example shown, the insertion member plates 54, 55 are spaced apart from each other and define a volume 58 therebetween. In one embodiment, the insertion member 44 has a size selected to cooperate with the size of the slot 36. Useable lengths for the insertion member 44 is less than 70 mm, for example, 20-60 mm, and in particular, 35-50 mm. The width of the insertion member 44 from an exterior of the insertion member plate 54 to the exterior of the insertion member plate 55 is also selected to cooperate with the dimension of the slots 36. In this embodiment, the width will be less than 20 mm, for example, 4-12 mm.

[0021] At an end of the insertion member plates 54, 55 opposite of the bight section 56 are a pair of bridges 61, 62 that blocks access to the volume 58 from the region above the insertion member 44. For example, if the connection device 24 is accommodating a tendon in a portion of the connection device above the insertion member 44, the bridges 61, 62 will prevent the tendon from sliding within the volume 58.

[0022] Still in reference to FIGS. 4-8, one example connection device 24 includes an integral shank 64 extending from the insertion member extension member 48 and being spaced from each of the first and second insertion member ends 46, 47. A variety of implementations are possible. In the embodiment depicted, the shank 64 extends generally perpendicular from the insertion member extension 48.

[0023] In one example, the shank 64 includes a pair of shank plates 66, 67. In the embodiment shown, the shank plates 66, 67 are parallel to each other and spaced apart to define an open volume 68 therebetween.

[0024] The shank 64 has a length that is defined as being between the insertion member 44 and a handle member 70, described below. The length of the shank 64 is less than the length of the insertion member 44, in one example.

[0025] In the embodiment shown, the connection device 24 includes handle member 70. Preferably, the handle member 70 is integral with the shank 64. The handle member 70 extends from the shank 64 at an end of the shank 64 remote from the insertion member 44.

[0026] In the example depicted, the handle member 70 has first and second handle ends 72, 73. Between the first handle end 72 and the second end 73 is a handle member extension 74.

[0027] In the embodiment shown, the shank 64 is spaced from each of the first and second handle ends 72, 73.

[0028] The handle member 70 has a length defined between the first handle end 72 and the second handle end 73. While many designs are contemplated, in the particular embodiment illustrated, the length of the handle member 70 is greater than the length of the insertion member 44. In one example, the length of the shank 64 is less than half of the length of the handle member 70 and insertion member 44. These relative dimensions cooperate with the slot 36 and allow for quick, convenient fastening of the first and second webs 20, 22.

[0029] In example embodiments, the length of the handle member 70 is not greater than 100 mm, typically, 30-80 mm, for example, 45-55 mm.

[0030] In the embodiment shown, the length of the handle member 70 is at least 10 percent greater than the length of the insertion member 44. This relative geometry helps to ensure that the connection device 24 will stay in place within the slot 36 and not work its way out.

[0031] In the embodiment shown, the handle member extension 74 includes first and second ears 76, 77 projecting therefrom. The ears 76, 77 are projecting away from the insertion member 44. In the embodiment shown, the first and second ears 76, 77 are rounded and are even with the first and second handle ends 72, 73.

[0032] Still in reference to FIGS. 4-8, the handle member 70 further includes a base plate 80 and angled handle plate 81 extending from the base plate 80. The angled handle plate 81 joins the base plate 80 at an intersection 82. From the intersection 82, the angled handle plate 81 extends at an angle from the base plate 82 until reaching the shank plate 66 of the shank 64. The angled handle plate 81 and the base plate 80 define a volume 84 therebetween. A pair of handle bridges 86, 87 extend between the angled handle plate 81 and base plate 80 at a portion of the handle member extension 74 that is opposite of the ears 76, 77. The bridges 86,

87 can help prevent a tendon that is accommodated within the volume 68 of the shank plates 66, 67 from passing into the volume 84 of the handle member 70.

[0033] Turning again to FIG. 3, it can be seen that in use, the connection device 24 will have the insertion member 44 on one side 40 of the overlap region and the handle member 70 on second side 42 of the overlap region 38. The shank 64 extends through the overlap region 38. Methods of using the connection device 24 are described further below. The connection device 24 can also be made from a single, solid piece of material, such as being cast in solid plastic.

[0034] A second embodiment of connection device 24 is depicted in FIGS. 9-12. The connection device 24 depicted in FIGS. 9-12 includes an insertion member 90, a shank 92, and a handle member 94. In this embodiment of connection device 24, there is further included a bearing member 96. The bearing member 96 extends from the shank 92 and is spaced from each of the insertion member 90 and handle member 94.

[0035] In the embodiment shown, the bearing member 96 includes a pair of arms 98, 99 extending from the shank 92. As can be seen in FIGS. 11 and 12, each of the arms 98, 99 has a width that is greater than a width of the insertion member 90 and handle member 94. The bearing member 96 is shaped for surface contact and load transfer with the strip 26. In use, the bearing member 96 will be on the same side 42 of the cell overlap region 38 as handle member 94.

[0036] In this embodiment, the handle member 94 has first and second ears 101, 102 that project toward the insertion member 90.

[0037] In use, the connection device 24 can be utilized to fasten two expanded cell confinement structures together. The method includes aligning two expanded cell confinement structures 18 so that at least one open slot 36 defined by first web 20 is aligned with at least one slot 36 defined by second web 22 to form overlap region 38.

[0038] Connection device 24 is provided. Connection device 24 is used by inserting the insertion member 44, 90 from the second side 42 of the overlap region 38 through the aligned open slots 36 of the overlap region 38. This provides the insertion member 44, 90 on the first side 40 of the overlap region 38. It provides the handle member 70, 94 on the second side 42 of the overlap region 38. It provides the shank 64, 92 to extend through the overlap region 38.

[0039] The method also includes rotating the handle member 70, 94 to rotate the connection device 24 within the overlap region 38. This helps to lock the connection device 24 within the slots 36.

[0040] In some implementations, the method can further include a step of orienting a tendon to pass through volume 68 defined by the shank 64 and through the overlap region 38.

[0041] An example of use of a tendon 110 is shown in connection with the connector device 24

of FIGS. 9-12 as shown in FIGS. 13-15. In FIG. 13, the tendon 110 is illustrated as wrapped around the handle member 94 at wrap 112. The tendon 110 is positioned under the handle member 94 and wrapped up and over one side of the handle 94. The tendon continues wrapping around the upper portion of the handle 94 to form a cross-wrap. In FIG. 13, it can be seen how the insertion member 90 is inserted or engaged into the slots 36 of two adjacent webs 20, 22, either end-to-end or edge-to-edge. The tendon 110 can also be seen extending through the slots 36 of the webs 20, 22, although the slots 36 are not visible in FIG. 13. FIG. 14 shows full engagement of the connector device 24 through the slots 36. In FIG. 14, the final step of rotating the connector device 24 to lock the connector device 24 within the slots 36 is illustrated. By comparing FIGS. 14 and 15, it can be seen that the connector device 24 is rotated about 90 degrees.

[0042] Preferably, the step of rotating includes rotating the handle member 70, 94 about 90 degrees.

[0043] In use, the slots 36 will be non-circular, for example, elliptical, or elongated-circular, or racetrack-shaped. In one embodiment, the slots 36 are shaped like two semi-circles separated by a rectangle of which one side of the rectangle is equal to the diameter of the semi-circle. When used, this shape will have a major axis and a minor axis. The aspect ratio of useable slots 36 as a ratio of the minor axis compared to the major axis is about 3:11. When compared to the dimensions of the connection device 24, the major axis of the slot 36 has a length that is 85-95%, for example, 92%, of the length of the insertion member 44, 90. The minor axis of the slot 36 will be 20-30%, for example, about 25%, of the length of the insertion member 44, 90. Further, the minor axis of the slot 36 will be about 101% of the width or thickness of the connection device 24.

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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Patent documents cited in the description

- US2008213521A1 **[0004]**
- JP57085045U **[0005]**
- KR20070066397 **[0005]**
- US1666783A **[0005]**

Patentkrav

1. Cellulært begrænsningssystem (14) omfattende:

(a) et første enhedsnet af celler (20) fremstillet af langstrakte plaststrimler (26) forbundet i områder med afstand derimellem; hvor strimlerne (26) danner vægge (30) af cellerne; hvor mindst nogle af cellerne definerer åbne slidser (36); og

(b) et andet enhedsnet af celler (22) fremstillet af langstrakte plaststrimler (26) forbundet i områder med afstand derimellem; hvor strimlerne (26) danner vægge (30) af cellerne; hvor mindst nogle af cellerne definerer åbne slidser (36);

(i) hvor mindst en åben slids i det første enhedsnet af celler (20) er anbragt på linje med mindst en åben slids (36) i det andet enhedsnet af celler (22), hvilket resulterer i et celleoverlapningsområde (38); hvor celleoverlapningsområdet (38) har modsatte første (40) og anden sider (42);

kendetegnet ved

(c) mindst en forbindelsesindretning (24) som fastgør det første enhedsnet af celler (20) og det andet enhedsnet af celler (22) til hinanden; hvilken forbindelsesindretning (24) inkluderer:

(i) et indføringselement (44) som har første (46) og anden (47) modsatte indføringsender og en indføringselementforlængelse (48) derimellem; hvor indføringselementet (44) har en første længde mellem de første og anden indføringsender;

(A) indføringselementet (44) er placeret på den første side (40) af celleoverlapningsområdet (38);

(ii) et integreret skaft (64) som strækker sig i almindelighed vinkelret fra indføringselementforlængelsen (48) og er anbragt med afstand fra hver af de første (46) og anden (47) indføringsender;

(A) hvor skaftet (64) strækker sig gennem celleoverlapningsområdet (38) ved at strække sig gennem både den ene åbne slids (36) i det første enhedsnet af celler (20) og den ene åbne slids (36) i det andet enhedsnet af celler (22), som er anbragt på linje;

(iii) et integreret grebselement (70) som strækker sig i almindelighed vinkelret fra skaftet (64) ved en ende af skaftet (64) fjernt fra indføringselementet (44); hvor grebselementet (70) har første (72) og anden (73) grebsender og en grebselementforlængelse (74) derimellem; hvor skaftet (64) er anbragt med afstand til hver af de første (72) og anden (73) grebsender; og

(A) hvor grebselementet (70) er placeret på den anden side (42) af celleoverlapningsområdet (38).

2. Cellulært begrænsningssystem (14) ifølge krav 1, hvor:

(a) grebselementet (70) har en anden længde mellem de første (72) og anden (73) grebsender;

(b) skaftet (64) har en tredje længde mellem indføringselementet (44) og grebselementet (70);

(c) den anden længde er større end den første længde; og

(d) den tredje længde er mindre end halvdelen af de første og anden længder.

3. Cellulært begrænsningssystem (14) ifølge krav 1, hvor skaftet (64) inkluderer et par skaftplader (66, 67), som er parallelle med hinanden og anbragt med afstand til hinanden for at definere et åbent volumen derimellem og for at kunne rumme lejet af lasten af cellerne på skaftpladerne, når de sættes i drift under last.

4. Cellulært begrænsningssystem (14) ifølge krav 3, yderligere omfattende et forspændt element (110), som strækker sig gennem det åbne volumen i skaftet (64) og gennem den ene åbne slids i det første enhedsnet af celler (20) og den ene åbne slids i det andet enhedsnet af celler (22), som er anbragt på linje.

5. Cellulært begrænsningssystem (14) ifølge krav 1, yderligere omfattende et lejeelement (96), som strækker sig fra skaftet (64) og anbragt med afstand til hvert af indføringselementet (44) og grebselementet (70); hvor lejeelementet (96) er placeret inde i en celle af det andet enhedsnet af celler (22).

6. Cellulært begrænsningssystem (14) ifølge krav 2, hvor den anden længde er mindst 10% større end den første længde.

7. Cellulært begrænsningssystem (14) ifølge krav 1, hvor den mindst ene forbindelsesindretning (24) inkluderer en flerhed af forbindelsesindretninger (24), hvor hver forbindelsesindretning (24) fastgør det første enhedsnet af celler (20) og det andet enhedsnet af celler (22) til hinanden.

DRAWINGS

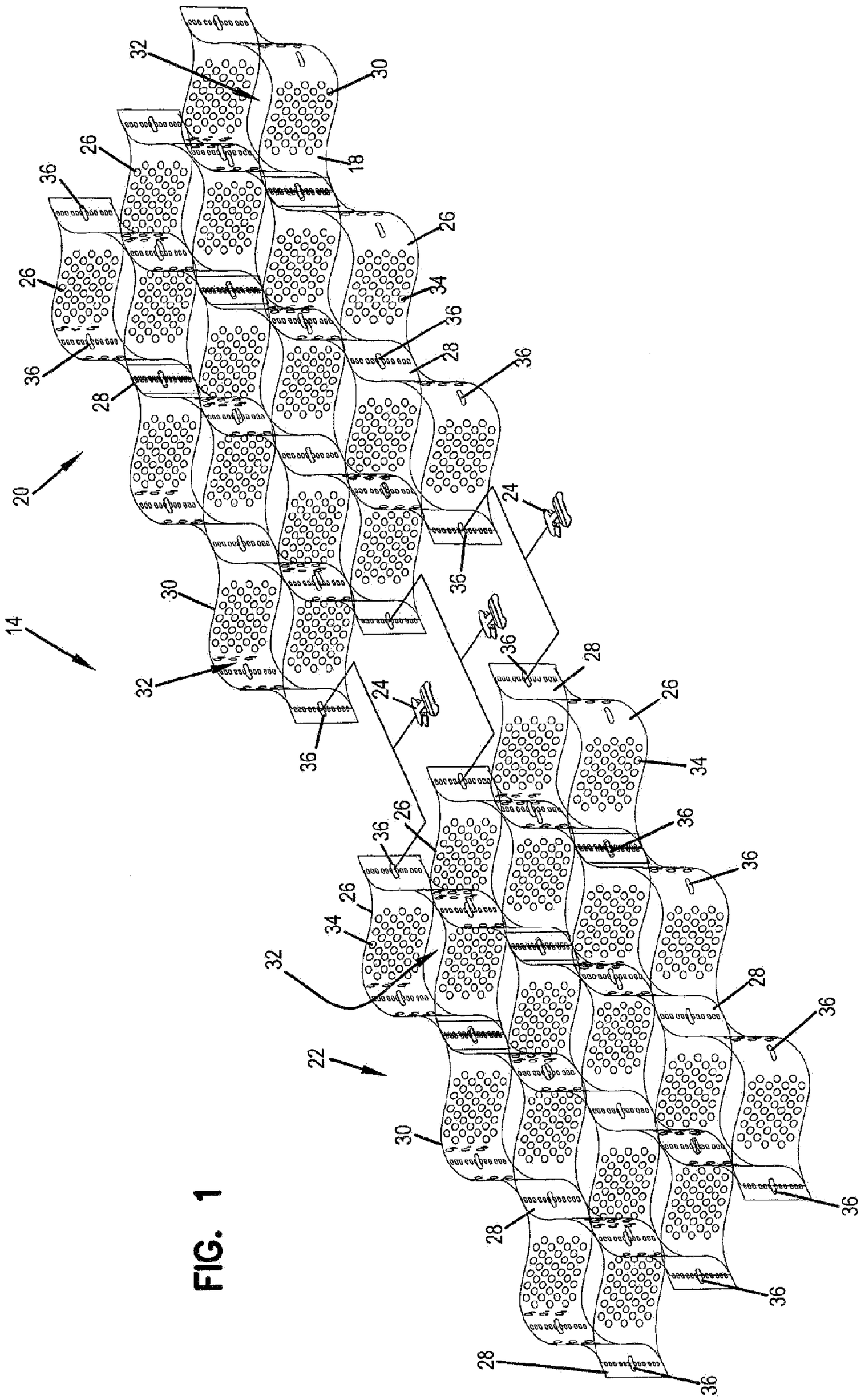

FIG. 1

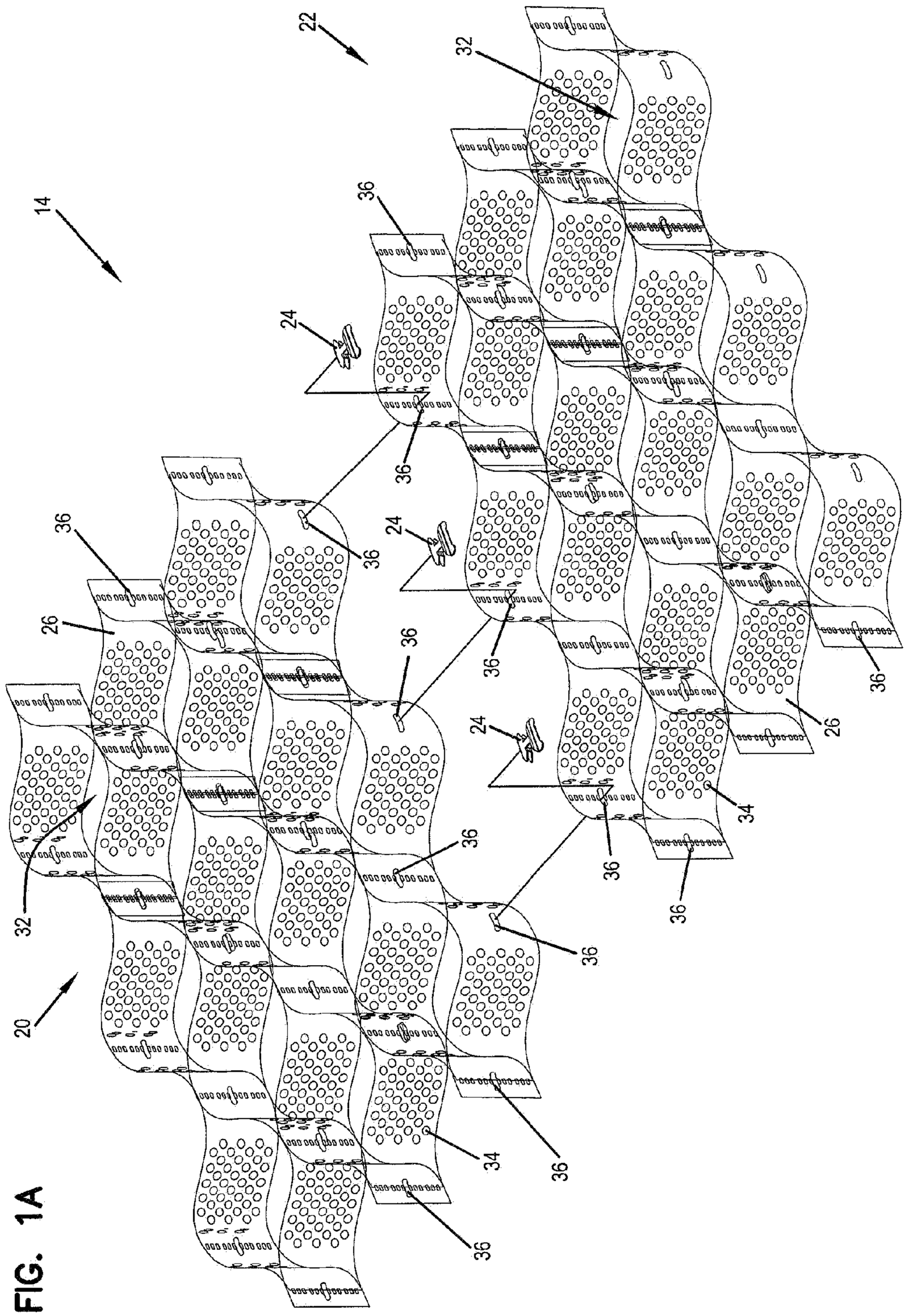

FIG. 1A

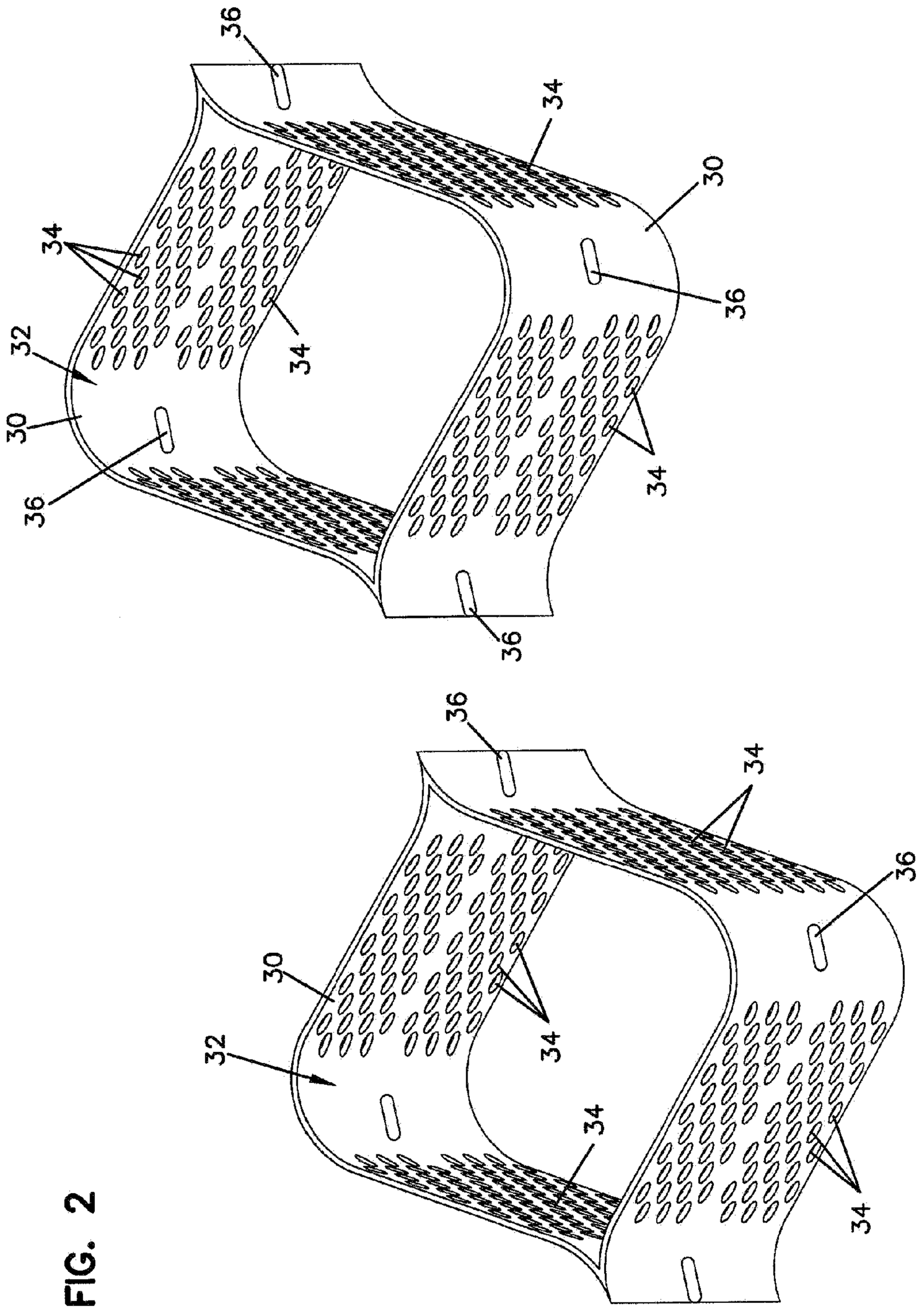

FIG. 2

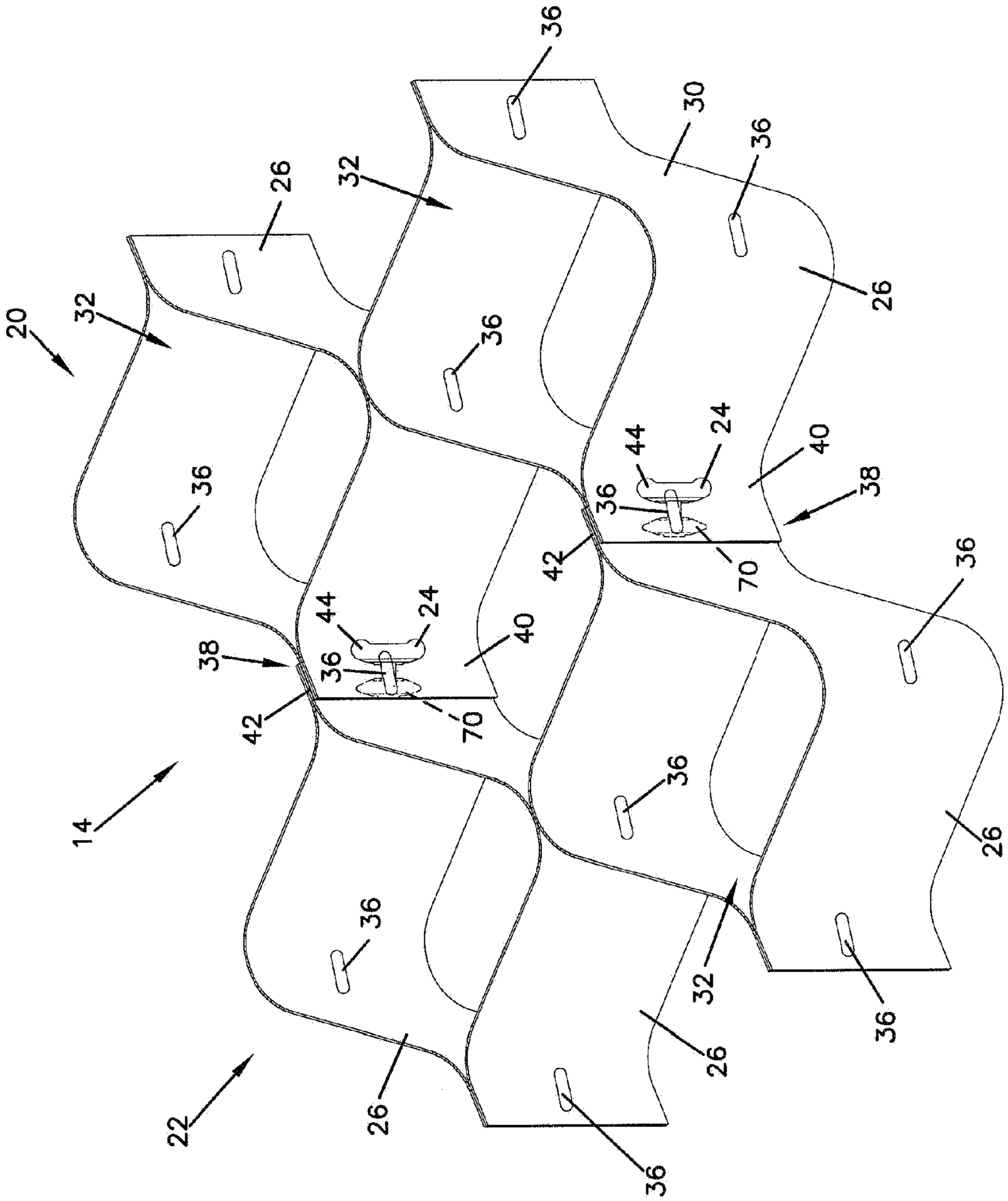
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FIG. 3

FIG. 4

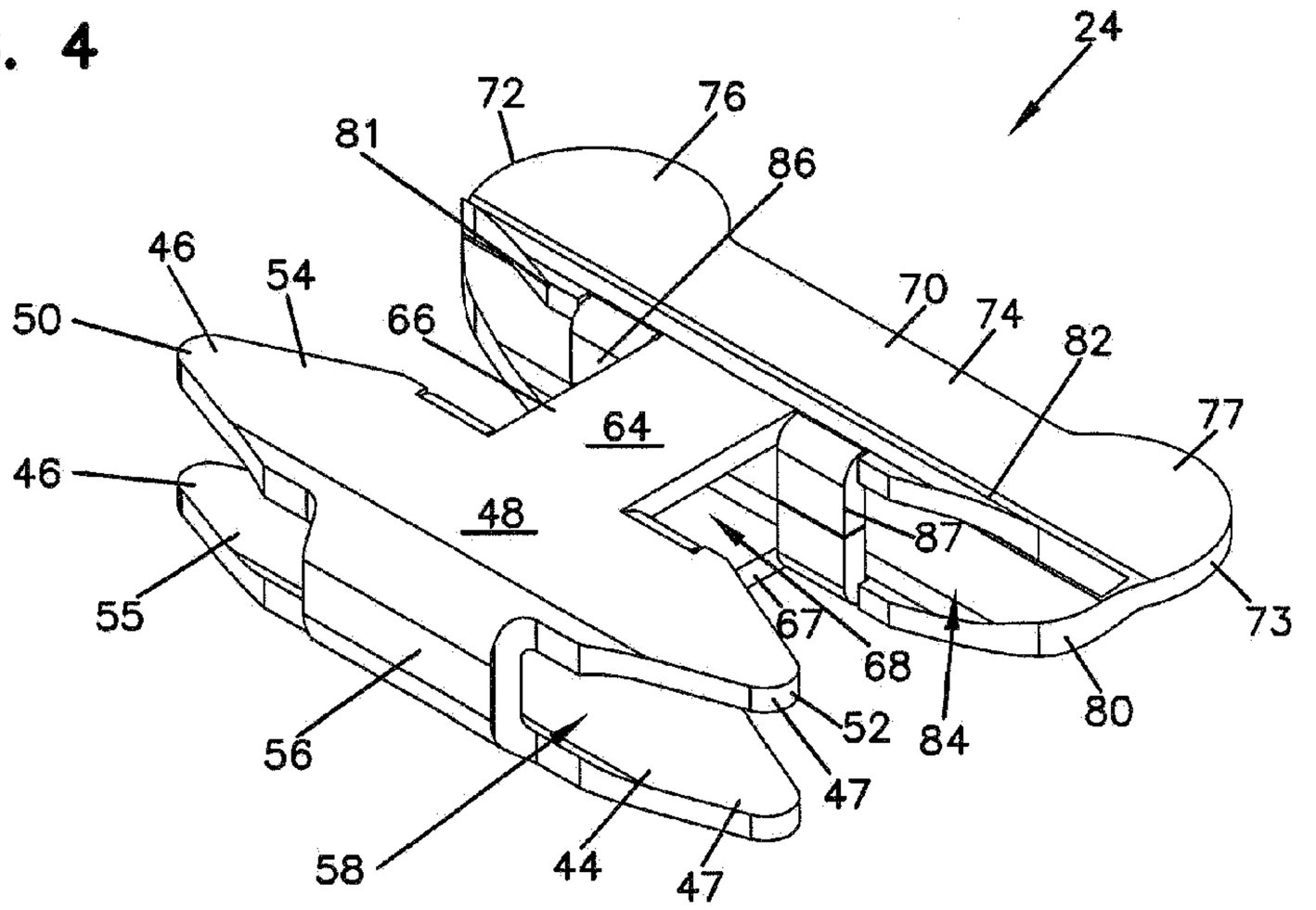
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FIG. 5

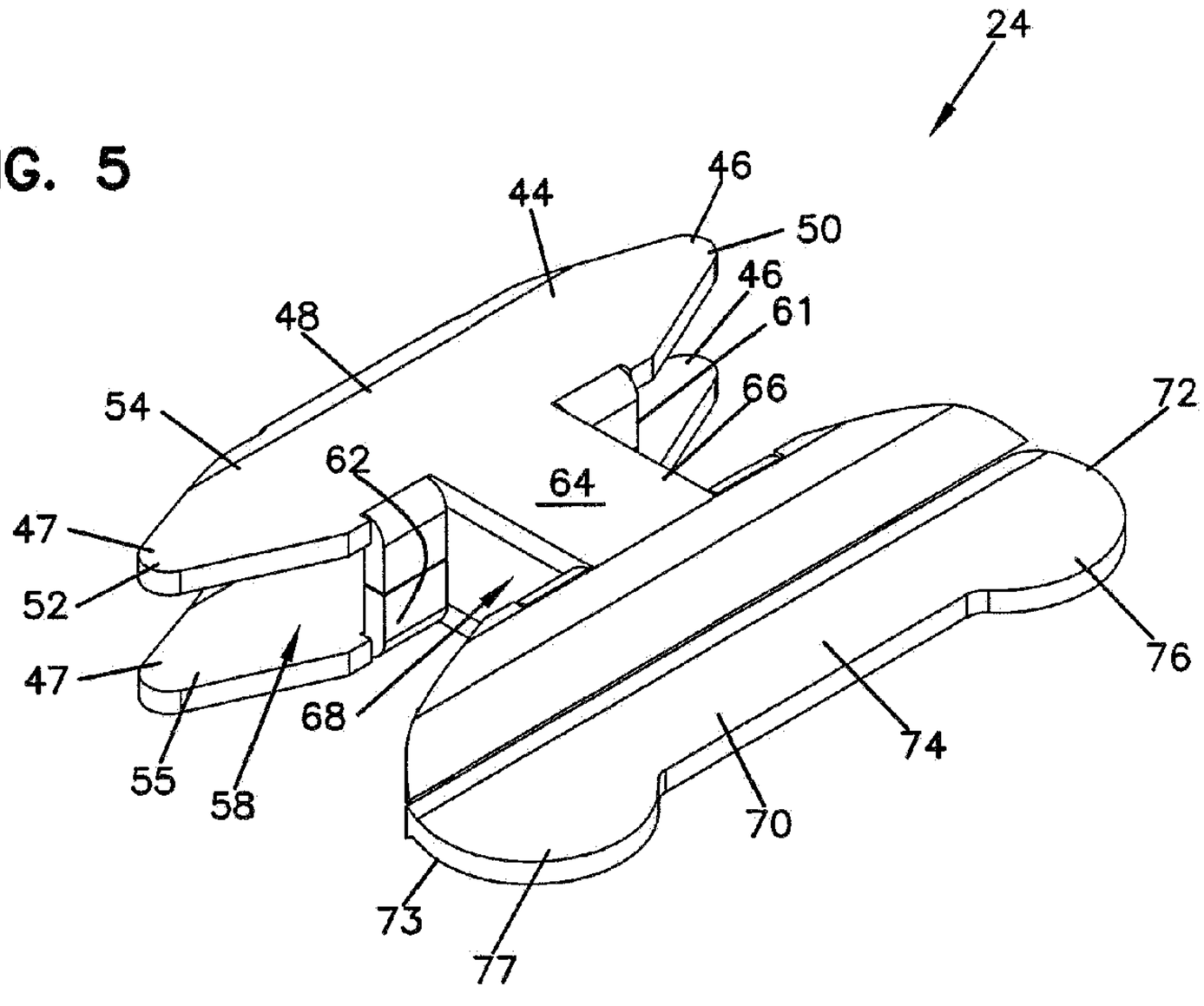
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FIG. 6

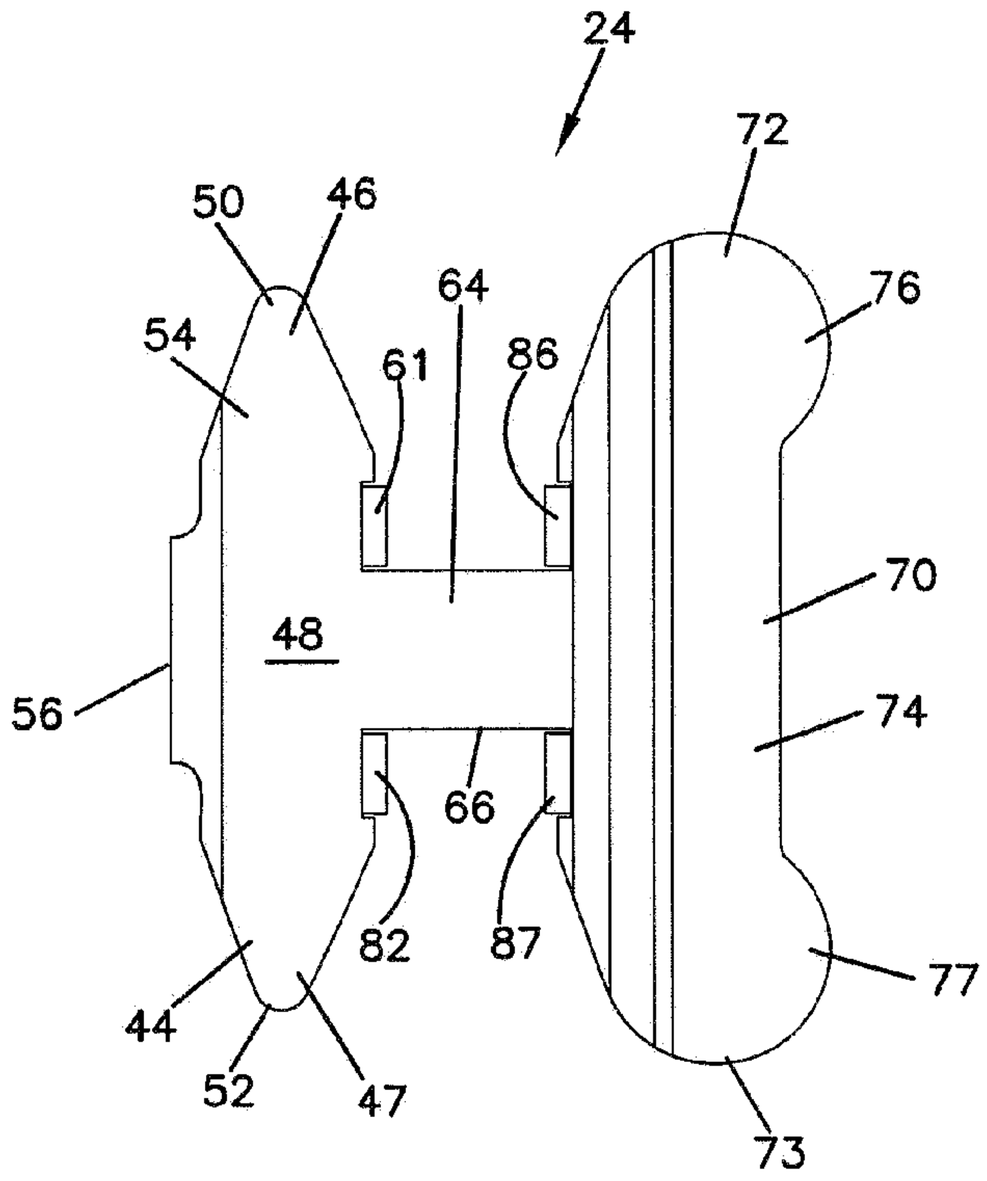


FIG. 7

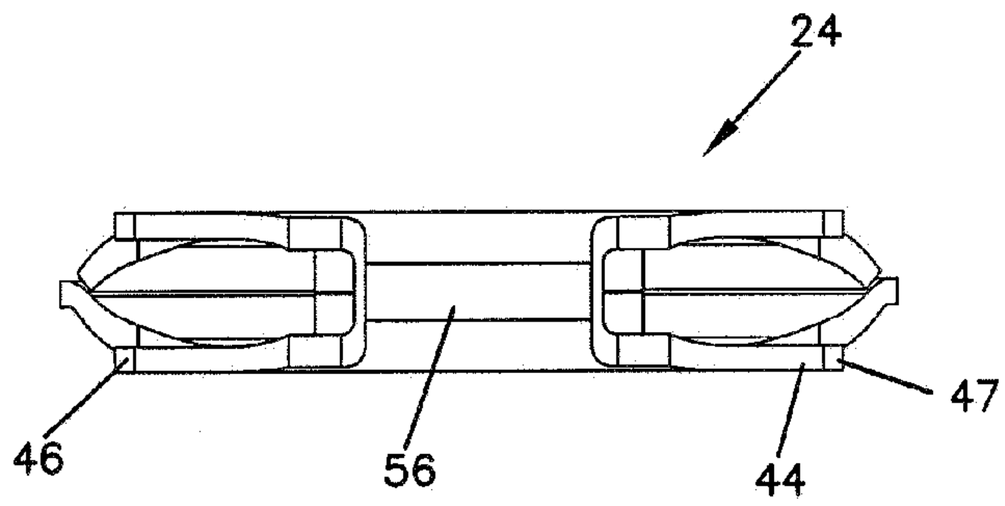


FIG. 8

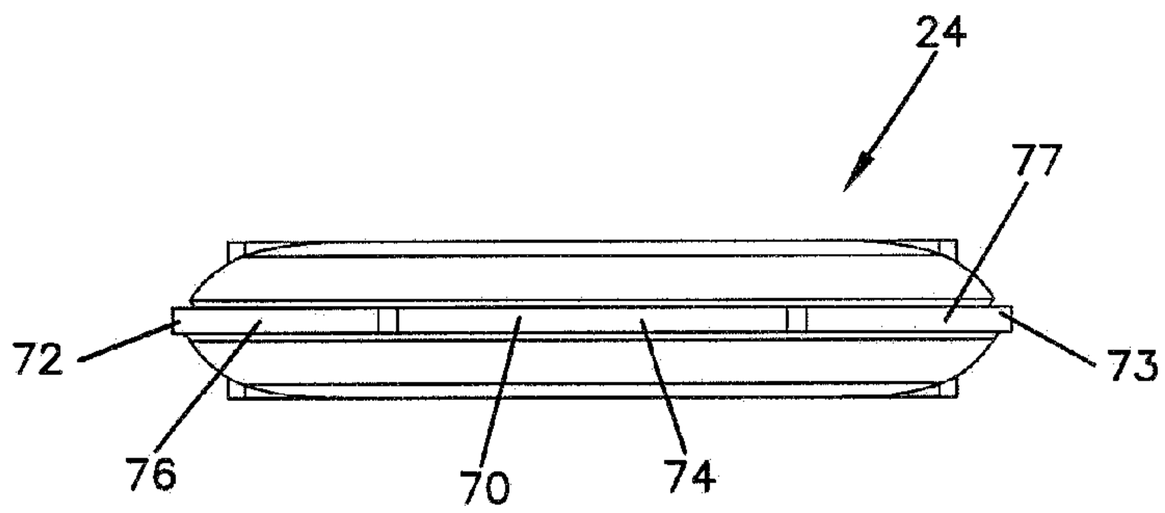


FIG. 9

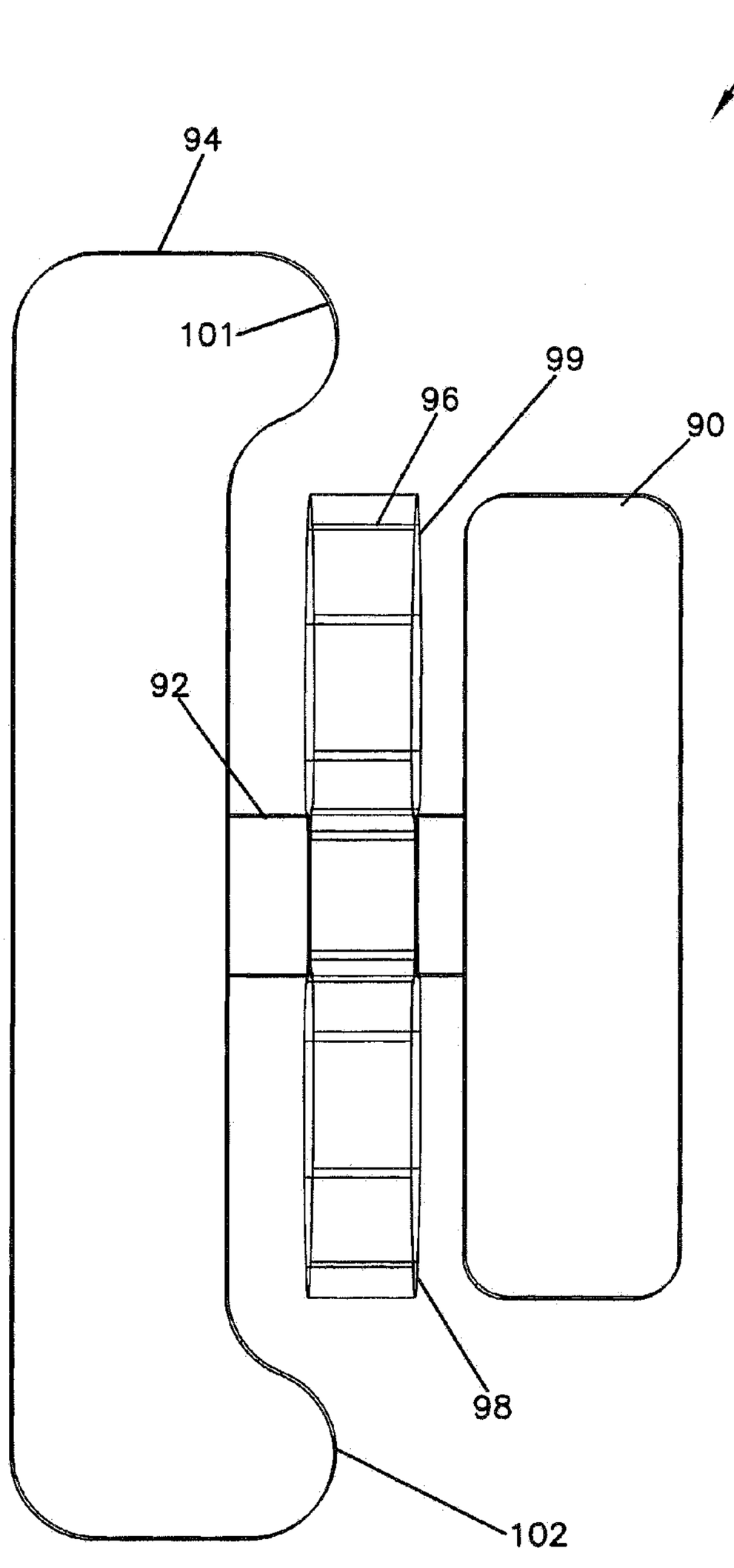


FIG. 10

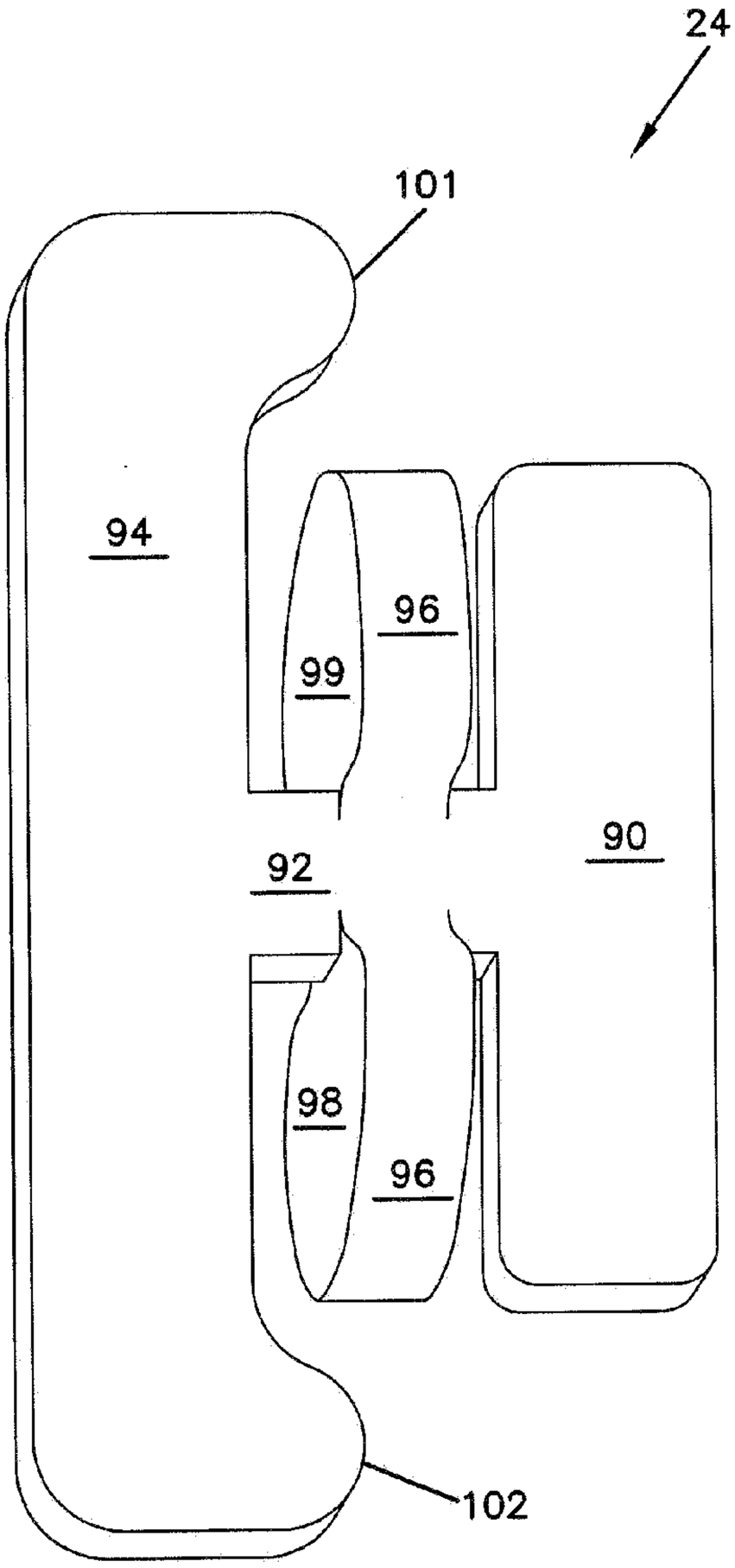


FIG. 11

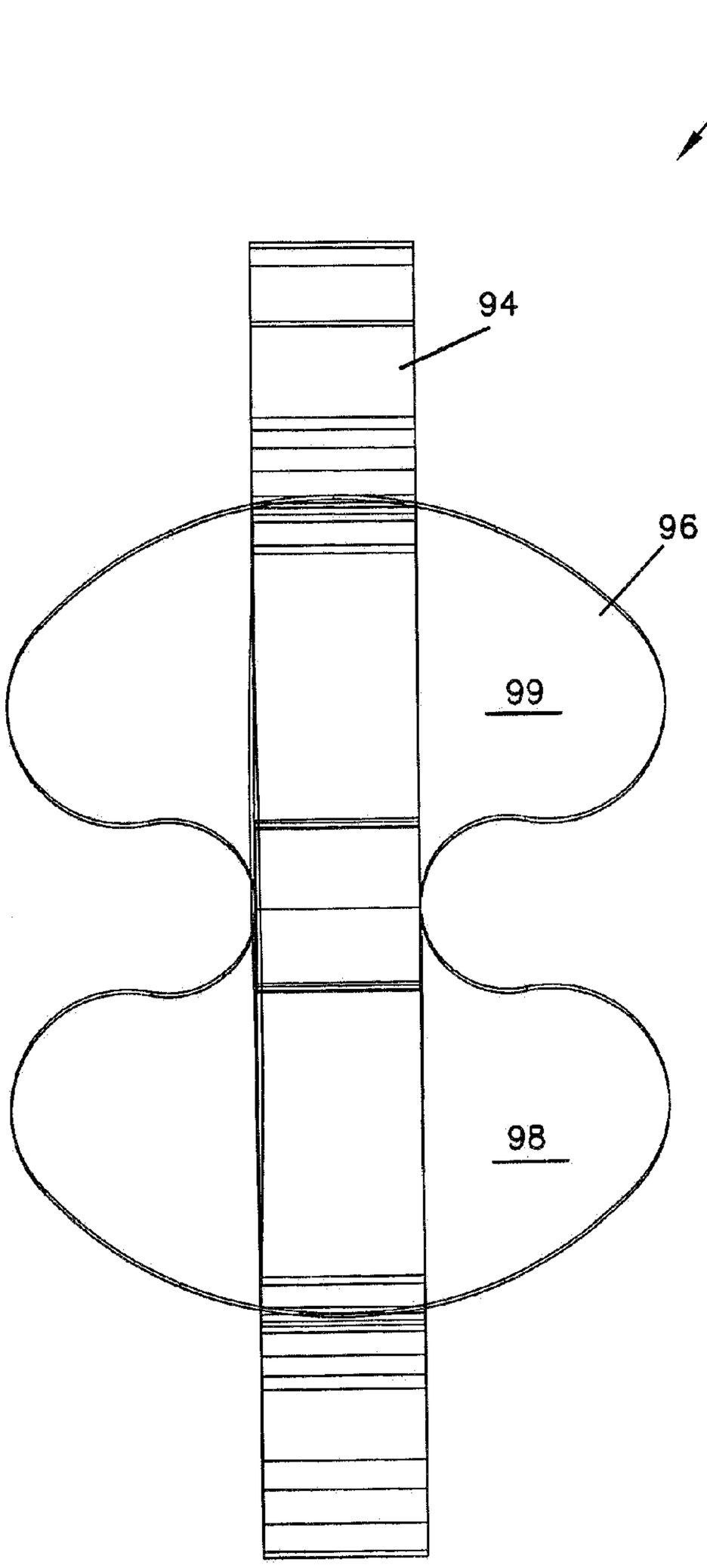
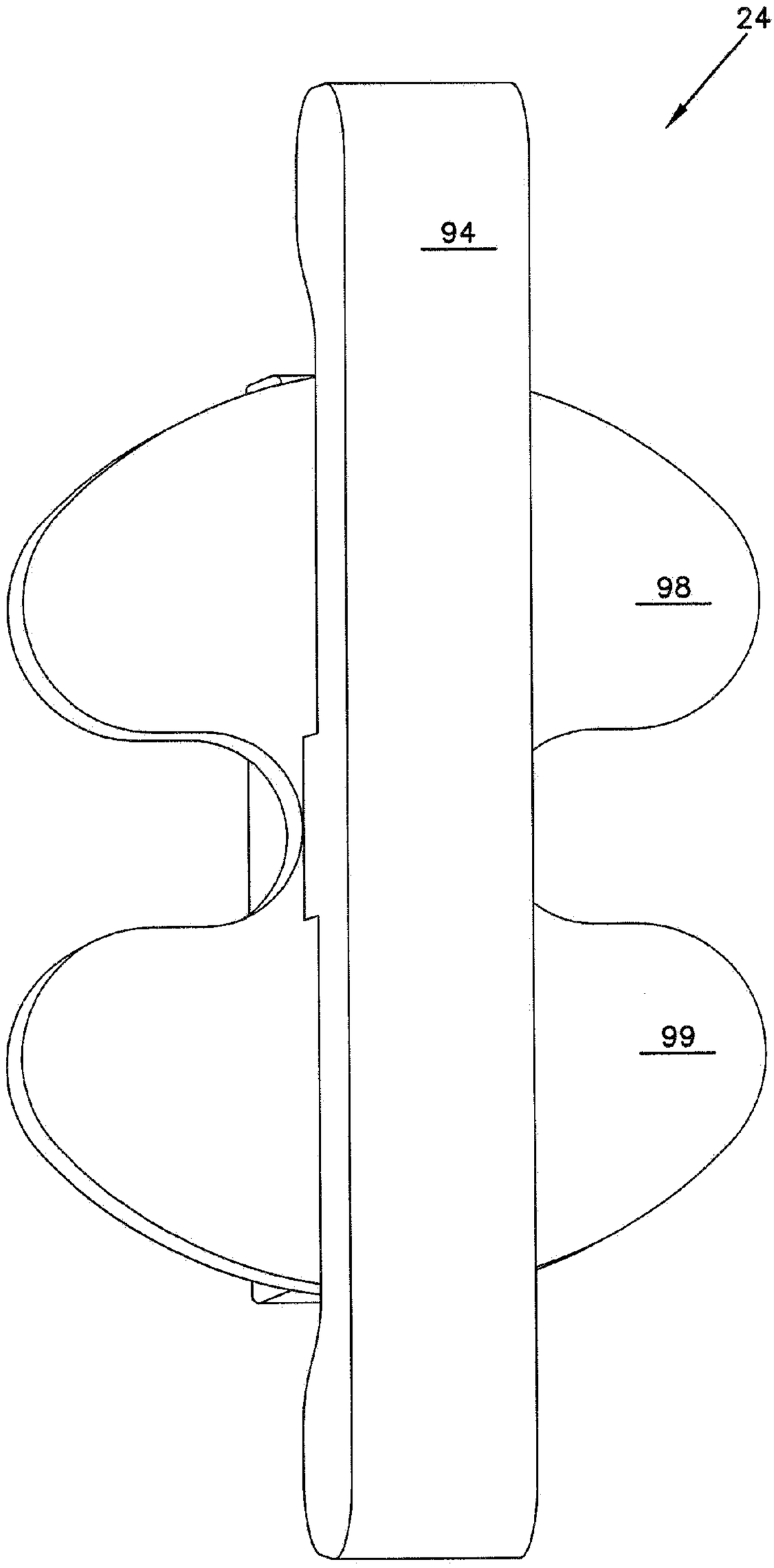


FIG. 12



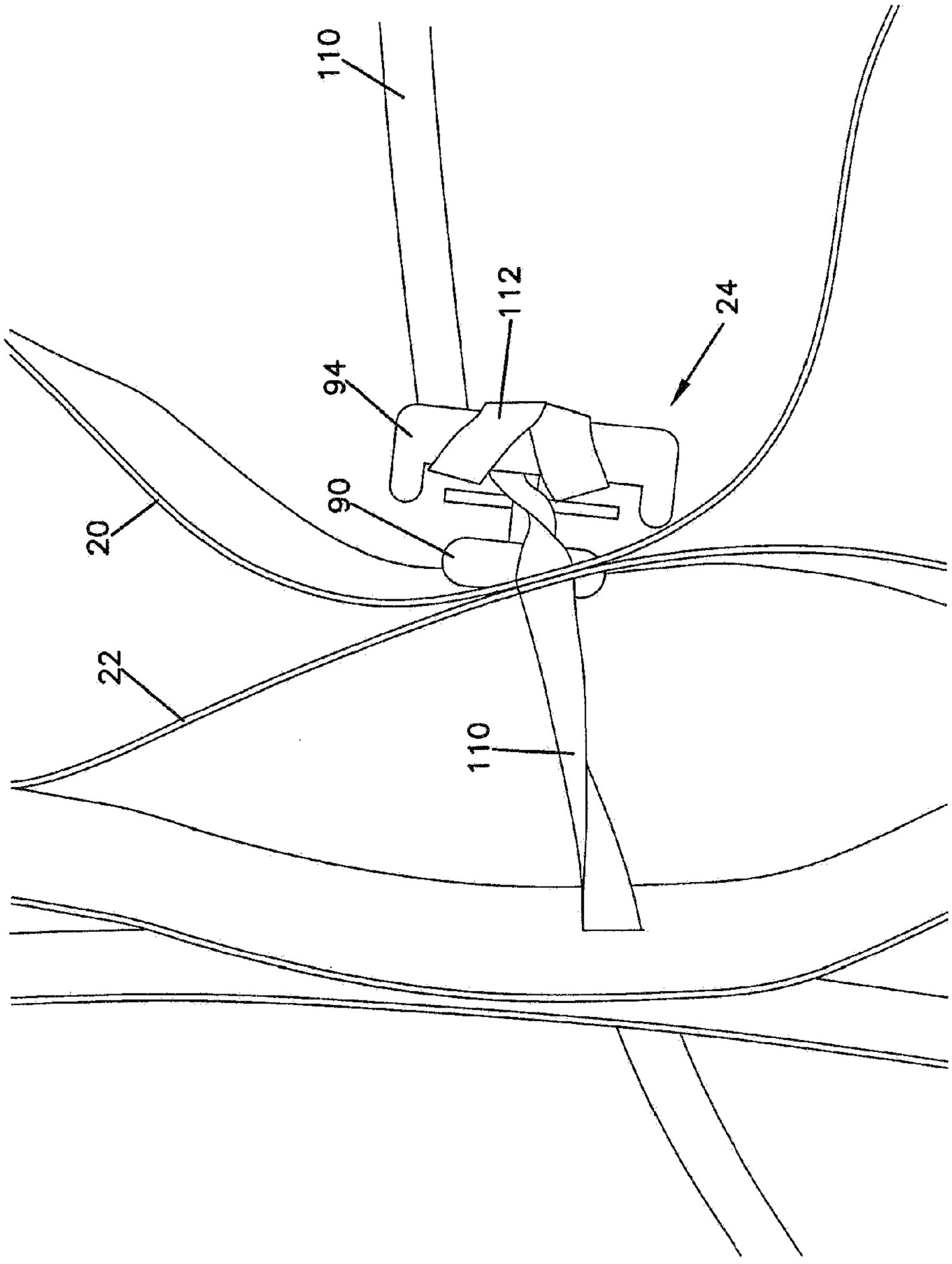


FIG. 13

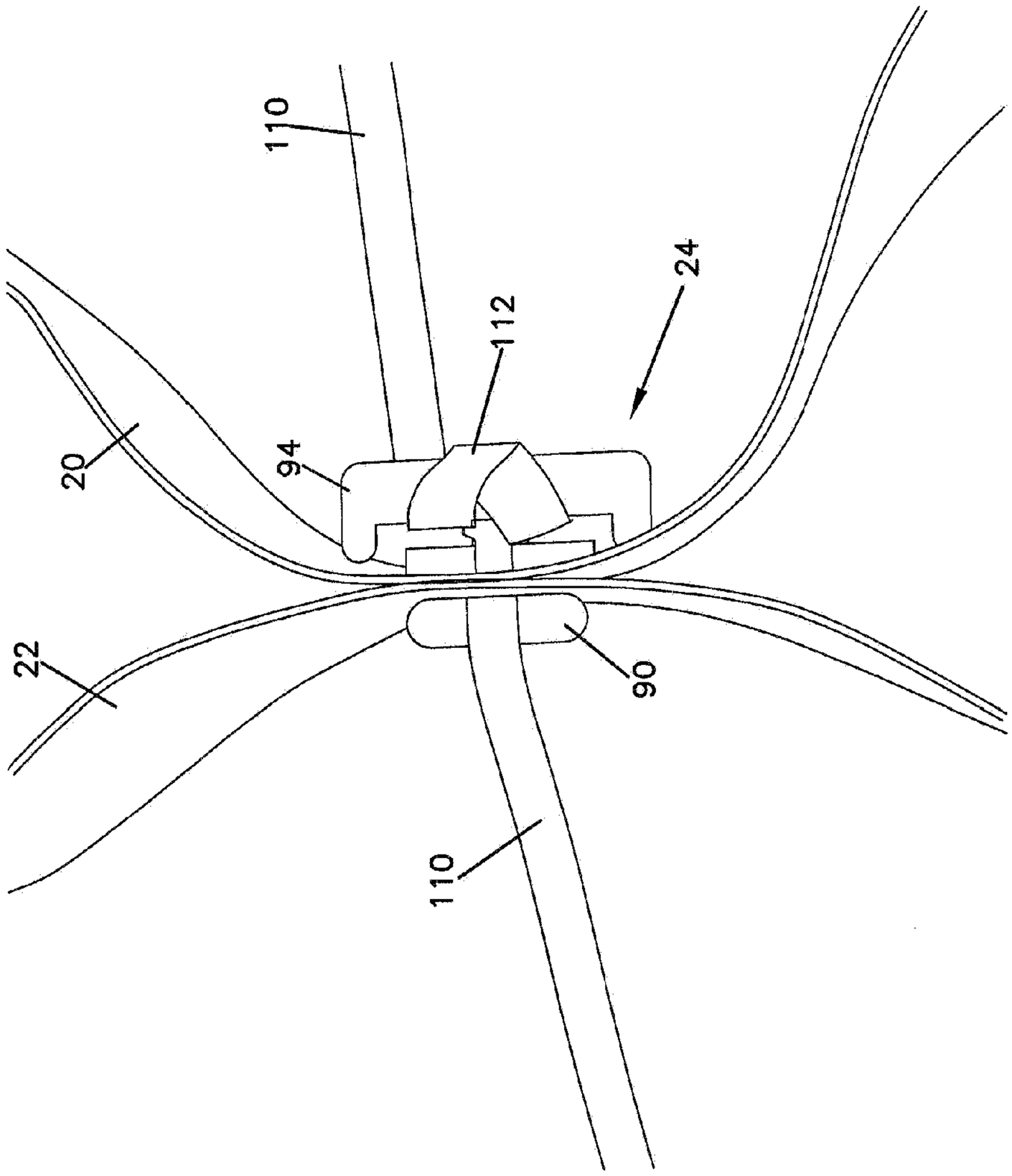


FIG. 14

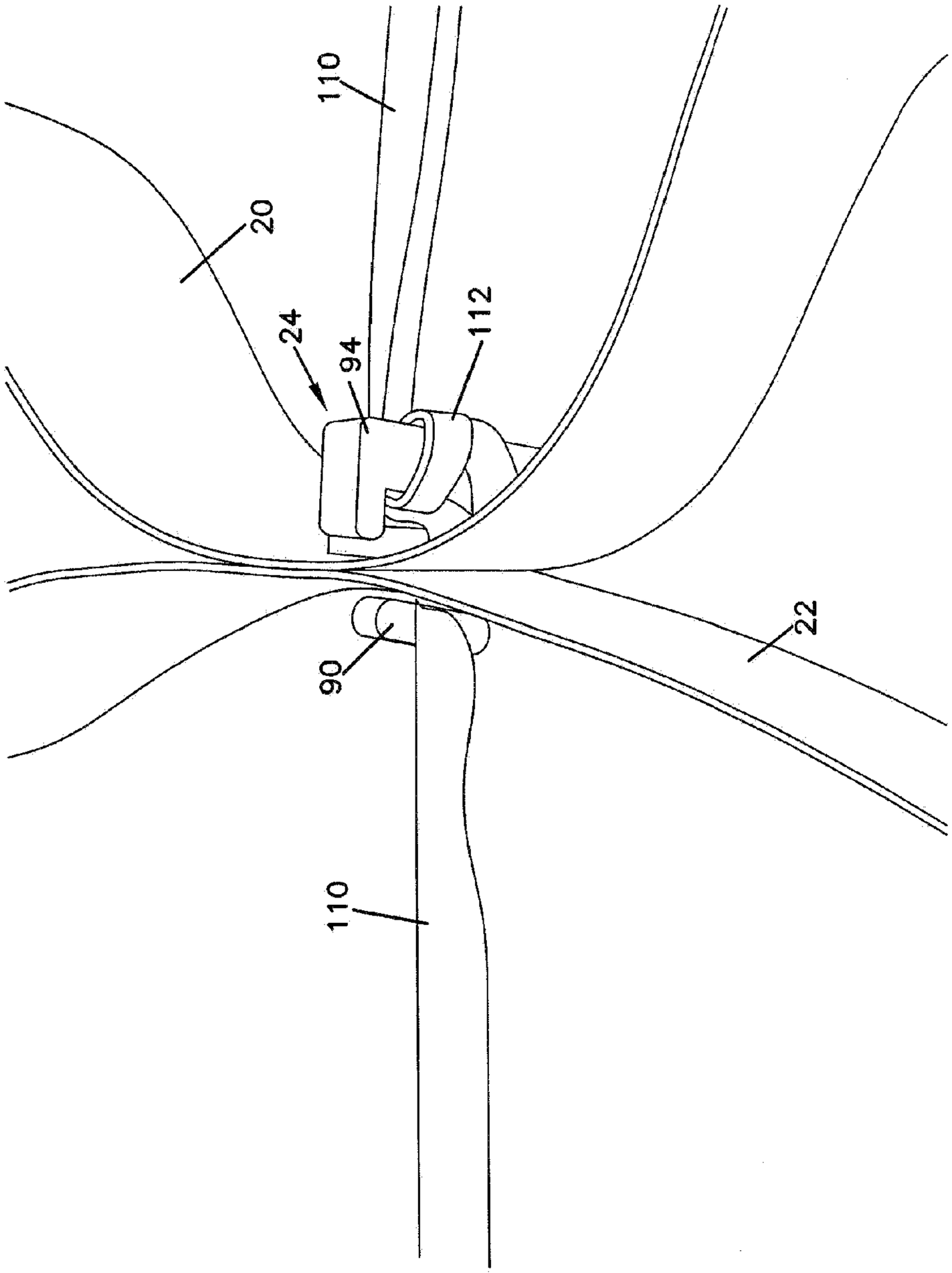


FIG. 15